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ABSTRACT

This document describes a curriculum framework for a planning process that should be undertaken by local education agencies (LEAs) and institutions in Great Britain. It suggests a focus on the curriculum that synthesizes existing plans, unifies programs, and emphasizes planning for learning and learners. The next section proposes that the scheme, plan, curriculum statement, and development strategy produced as a result of LEA curriculum planning should be seen as having separate but interconnected functions. It recommends that resources should be related to learning, planning should provide the opportunity for development and accountability, and there should be adequate support. A curriculum framework common to all learners provides the basis for the most effective planning. The framework is described as being a statement of what should be provided and comprising a detailed statement of the aims, principles, and procedures of the education service. A section on curriculum entitlement suggests that the minimum entitlement should comprise negotiated content, negotiated and prespecified outcomes, individual progression opportunities, and learning experiences that are the same for everyone. A discussion of institutional provision recommends publishing of a mission statement and formulation of an action plan as steps in the provision of learning that is enriching and equitable. (YLB)

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TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT

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TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT

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FOREWORD

This paper has been prepared by FEU officers to assist those in LEAs and institutions who are involved in overall curriculum planning and who are aiming for learning programmes which are effective, equitable and enriching. Some recent developments have emphasised efficiency and rationalisation of provision and the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) has caused thought to be given to the principles underpinning the education service, but there has not been a focus on the curriculum itself and the processes which facilitate learning. In order to fill this gap, this paper proposes a suitable framework.

The framework is one which the FEU offers for consideration by LEA officers/advisers and institutional managers who are developing post-16 curriculum statements and policies following the ERA. However, the process of curriculum planning is continuous and long-term and so this paper, and the proposed framework, is one which we aim to continue to develop and which we hope will be just as relevant when the initial ERA response has been completed.

FEU is planning some activities relating to the curriculum framework described in this paper and would welcome contact with LEAs and institutions who are developing curriculum plans which reflect some of these ideas, and also from those who are putting the plans into action. Enquiries and comments concerning this paper, and information about future work, should be addressed to Stuart McCoy.

Requests for additional copies of this document, and other general enquiries, should be addressed to the Information Centre, FEU, 2 Orange Street, London WC2H 7WE.

Stuart McCoy
FEU Development Officer
January 1989

1. INTRODUCTION

This document describes the curriculum framework which should be provided as a result of strategic planning following the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). It is essentially about the type of educational processes that will facilitate learning and provide an appropriate learning environment for everyone. It describes curriculum entitlement as an obligation on providers (or those co-ordinating provision) rather than learners, and as a right to participate in certain learning experiences in addition to working towards particular outcomes.

Entitlement has become the subject of discussion in relation to post-16 planning of provision. Three dimensions of the discussion have emerged. These concern:

- the programme content to which learners should have access;
- the modes of learning to which everyone should be entitled (procedures);
- identification of the learners for whom curriculum entitlement should be provided (eligibility).

It is also apparent that the issue of entitlement needs to be addressed by, and has different implications for, both LEAs and institutions.

'Eligibility' may be politically difficult, but it is not conceptually complex. It may simply be a matter of deciding whether learners are entitled to a certain 'volume' of education or training post-16 without being required to pay fees, or whether (as now) it matters at what age they decide to participate. The clarification of the 'content' issue is also being helped by the identification of attainment targets as part of the National (school) Curriculum, and by the defining of competence by Lead Industry Bodies as part of the creation of National Vocational Qualifications. All three dimensions interrelate, but this document concentrates mainly on the relatively neglected issue of *how* learners should be treated, and the implications of this for the other two.

Although the origins of this discussion can be traced back over a period of about ten years, the recent focus on it has been as a result of the requirement for LEAs to develop a coherent plan for post-16 provision. Some LEAs and colleges refer explicitly to entitlement and others do not, but the objective of the planning and the outcome is the same, and that is to define what learners have a right to expect. In this paper, FEU proposes some strategies and design features to be incorporated into that planning process.

Further education has developed as a diverse service comprising a range of academic and vocational provision and lacking a commonly agreed curriculum framework within which to operate. The development of locally designed programmes, and an emphasis on meeting needs within a locality, has made the need to consider a common framework more urgent, as has recent government encouragement of greater legal and financial autonomy for colleges. Local developments should take place within agreed parameters and taking into account the underlying principles of the education service in the locale.

Government attention has recently turned to post-16 education. The 1986 Education Act required all LEAs to make a written statement of policy in relation to the school curriculum (including 16-19), with special regard to its range and balance. The 1988 Act goes beyond the scope of the 1986 Act in asking LEAs to formulate a policy specifically for FE. The ERA requires LEAs to submit schemes to the Secretary of State for approval, and they should describe the principles and procedures which they will use in providing further education.

Following approval of their schemes, LEAs will design annual (and continuous) plans which will allocate college budgets. This planning involves LEAs in managing institutional devolution, and colleges are being asked to focus on resource management. DES Circulars 8/88 and 9/88 place 'a duty on LEAs to delegate extensive financial powers to their FE colleges and to reform the composition and role of FE college governing bodies'. *Providing for Quality* (DES Circular 3/87, May 1987) asked LEAs to 'review their non-advanced provision for 16-19 year olds and to take any appropriate action in the interests of educational effectiveness and value for money' and *Managing Colleges Efficiently* (DES/LAA, HMSO, 1987) proposed a systems approach of inputs/outputs and performance indicators.

LEA officers are thus engaged in strategic planning of provision and this will include work-related FE planning, TVEI Extension planning and attempts to integrate the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ); in some cases it will also coincide with tertiary reorganisation. This planning is being undertaken at a time when the 16+ demographic downturn is dramatic in most areas, and when fundamental changes to the occupational structure are establishing a new profile of skills requirements and the need for training breadth and the development of a multi-skilled workforce. There is an increasing need to respond to local employment and community demands and to provide a service based on individualised learning programmes.

All this work will necessitate a review of post-16 (and probably post-14) provision and its underlying rationale. In reviewing and updating policy, therefore, it will be important for LEAs to develop a comprehensive plan which covers full- and part-time schemes, schools and FE, and provision for adults if that is separate.

LEAs may wish to consider the following questions:

- Does the LEA plan synthesise the various existing plans into one which is coherent and comprehensive?
- Does it attempt to unify school, college and community provision? 14-16, 16-19 and 19+?
- Does it have the clear purpose of providing better learning opportunities?

This will provide the starting-point for consideration of a new focus on the curriculum.

ADEQUATE FACILITIES

In formulating their policies, LEAs may wish to start by establishing the fundamental aims of the service, and this exercise will reveal possible tensions between access, quality, and economy. The minimum requirement of the ERA is an obligation on an LEA to 'secure the provision for their area of adequate facilities for FE'. Adequacy is left by the DES to be determined locally and against a background of competing needs and scarce resources. Adequate facilities could be defined in a narrow way, for example by merely describing the physical and human resources available. LEAs should define it in such a way that resources can be translated into provision which is adequate in terms of equity and quality, as well as range.

Officers who are preparing schemes will start by describing the fundamental principles of the service, in general terms, for approval by the Secretary of State. Officers may also wish to define the aims of the LEA service in more detail and have that endorsed by the elected members. This curriculum statement then becomes local policy to which LEA providers are accountable. The objective will be to provide a service which is both high quality and equitable.

LEAs will wish to do this for a variety of reasons. It follows naturally from the work on schemes of delegation, and provides a means of checking the plethora of existing types of provision against an agreed framework. The curriculum statement is a valuable document in the important process of continuing monitoring and evaluation. It also becomes a timely reminder that curriculum is at the heart of the service, and that resourcing models exist to ensure high-quality learning provision.

ENTITLEMENT

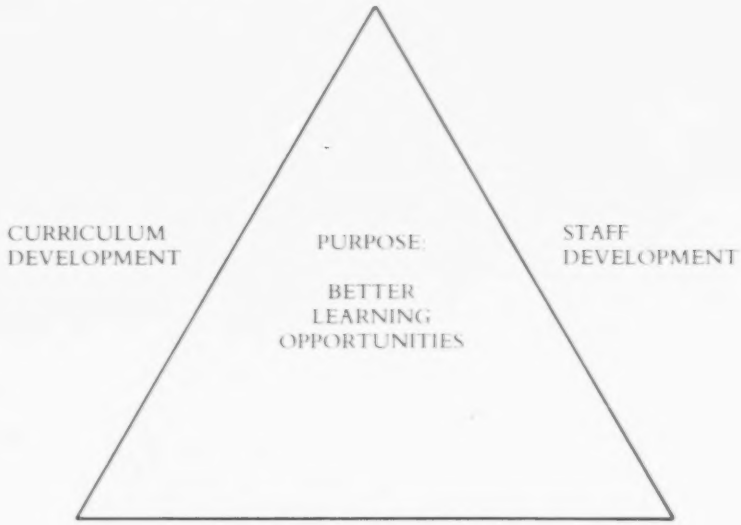
Some LEAs have chosen to approach the task by considering the concept of 'entitlement' as the basis for policy. In doing so they have attempted to define the range and quality of educational opportunities and experiences to which learners within the locality should have access. Whether it is called an entitlement or something else is less important than agreement that the planning is about the curriculum and for the benefit of the learners. Resourcing and organisational matters will provide the content of planning activity but the objectives should start (and finish) with the needs of individual learners.

CURRICULUM

FEU believes that the curriculum is more than merely a set of subjects, a syllabus or course; it is also more than the content of a particular learning programme. Curriculum involves all those processes which facilitate, or if they go wrong, inhibit, learning. It thus can be seen to include the means of recruitment to a programme and progression from it, the ethos of a learning institution, and learning styles, in addition to content. FEU also suggests that curriculum planning must take account of three 'levers' for change - curriculum development, staff development and institutional development - and that to be successful all three

must be roughly in phase, and supported (see figure 1). Curriculum design, for example, may be slow to take effect, because of lack of either staff expertise or organisational constraints. Conversely, institutional arrangements may make different learning programmes feasible. The task of the curriculum manager at whatever level (course team to LEA) is to keep these three factors in phase [1].

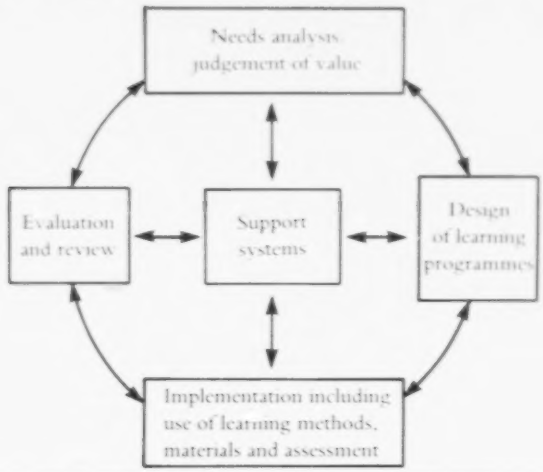
Figure 1: Means of developing provision



CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A useful starting-point for planning is to consider a model of curriculum development used by the FEU. A simplified version is shown below in figure 2. The model suggests that the adequacy of provision depends on the quality and appropriateness of all four processes shown in the outer circle, and the existence of the necessary systems required to support them. Thus, however well-resourced the implementation phase may be (for example), this cannot make up for inaccurate needs analysis or inappropriate programme design.

Figure 2: Processes of curriculum development


Needs analysis, judgement of value
Design of learning programmes
Implementation including use of learning methods, materials and assessment
Evaluation and review
Support systems

This model also suggests that versions of all four processes are necessary at whatever level provision is being planned: from the level of the locality, via individual institutions, down to and including those concerned with specific programmes. Also, at each level, the clients as well as the providers need to be involved, whether the former be identifiable sections of the community or individual learners, vocational sectors or specific companies. Clients and providers need to be involved in the analysis of needs and judgements about priorities, the negotiation of learning programmes appropriate to these needs and priorities, and the evaluation of the extent to which the latter have been met. Implementation must also involve the active participation of the learner, and be flexible enough to adapt to different learning styles.

Like all models, this represents an ideal case. Nevertheless, it does illustrate the variety of factors which need to be taken into account if the planning process is to achieve its purpose - the efficient provision of better learning opportunities. The role of the LEA is thus to design and support the development of the desired curriculum.

LEA officers may wish to consider whether:

- **the description of facilities and resources is clearly related to learning and learners;**
- **there is also a curriculum statement described in such a way that it is both a yardstick for accountability *and* a framework for development;**
- **the curriculum planning involves the systematic process of needs analysis, curriculum design, supported implementation and continuous evaluation;**
- **there is a coherent plan for support which includes curriculum development, staff development and institutional development.**

Appendix 1 provides extracts from LEA curriculum statements which illustrate some of the ideas in this section.

4. COMMON CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Over a period of ten years, FEU has proposed and refined a framework within which the post-16 curriculum should be offered. The curriculum framework, in this sense, refers to the aims, principles and procedures within which all learning programmes should be designed and implemented.

AIMS

FEU suggests [2] that the education service should aim to provide:

- appropriate learning opportunities, regardless of gender, race, age and ability;
- opportunities for all learners to establish and develop a recognised competence base of knowledge, skills and experience, sufficient to facilitate progression into employment, further education, training, or other roles;
- an understanding of the local and national economic and social environment, to promote an appreciation of the variety of available adult roles in society;
- a basis for learners to increase their self-awareness, to appraise realistically their potential and prospects, and to become progressively responsible for negotiating their own personal development.

This set of generic aims can also be seen as a way of finding commonality across a diverse range of learning programmes.

These aims can be said to form the basis of an agenda of entitlement by providing individuals with equal opportunities to cope with change through progression, role competence and personal development. Alongside these aims, FEU suggests that there should be common learning themes applied to all learning programmes regardless of their content. These themes [2,3] are:

- relevance: provided by analysing the needs of the learners and the receiving agencies; integrating education, training, work and other aspects of life; placing a value on experience; developing a negotiated curriculum; and ensuring a balance between competing needs;
- flexibility: provided by timetabling to facilitate learning; allowing for individual differences in pace and style of learning; using formative, profiled assessment; introducing modularity to allow credit accumulation; and developing a curriculum to meet the needs of learners by negotiation and interaction;
- competence: provided by designing programmes that deliver a broad range of skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes; ensuring that the programme is integrated and includes work-based learning; developing a better awareness of standards and the ability to recognise and encourage appropriate performance by learners.

PRINCIPLES

Value judgements made by providers often manifest themselves directly in the learning experiences which individuals have in schools and colleges. Learners tend to have quite different

experiences according to the type of learning programme they are engaged in. This has happened partly because, particularly for 11- to 19-year-olds, we have generally worked to a deficit model of education in which the purpose of the service was to identify deficiency and remedy it, rather than to recognise proficiency and develop it. It is crucial that in developing a common curriculum framework, LEAs should encourage institutions to hold as fundamental principles that:

- learners are of equal value, regardless of their individual strengths and weaknesses;
- learners have access to appropriate programmes in the locality, within the physical and financial constraints prevailing at the time;
- learners have the opportunity and positive encouragement to maximise their own potential achievement;
- all learners are treated equally and benefit from certain common experiences, regardless of the nature of their learning programmes.

PROCEDURES

Over the last ten years, certain educational procedures have been recognised as effective and have been absorbed into practice. In 1981, FEU proposed [4] a set of connected procedures which can be summarised as: negotiation of the curriculum; provision of guidance; the opportunity to acquire relevant skills; formative and profiled assessment; valuing the experience of learners. This tended to be implemented only with a client group comprising learners with a variety of disadvantages who had previously not been well provided for. The DES supported these procedures [5] but as an alternative to the academic and mainstream vocational curricula, rather than as a common framework for all learners over the age of 16.

The framework described above should be implemented with all learners. No-one should be denied access to successful learning strategies and enriching curriculum elements and they should form part of the educational entitlement for everyone over the age of 14. These procedures are:

- **learner-centredness** : this involves arranging educational provision so that learners are involved in negotiating the content, style, and targets for their programmes - this is often facilitated by valuing their experience and engaging in profiled formative assessment;
- **maximised accessibility** : this is about ensuring that there are no artificial barriers to programmes, such as unnecessary entry requirements, and that every effort is made to provide for all of the potential learners in a locality;
- **integrated curriculum** : this involves making connections between the various elements of learning - between the (subject) components of a programme, between activities in an institution and outside it, and between past, present and future experience;
- **guidance and counselling** : this comprises a wide range of support for learners including educational, vocational and

personal guidance provided as a part of both learning programmes and the institutional infrastructure;

- **personal development** : an important consideration in the design of programmes is to ensure that there is both opportunity and encouragement for the development of personal qualities such as effectiveness and role awareness;
- **optimised progression** : all learners should have the opportunity to achieve their own personal targets and maximise their progress on a particular programme in order to advance to another programme or employment;
- **equality of opportunity and experience** : this is a starting-point, and implies that institutions should move from equality of access, through equality of treatment, towards equality of outcomes (having equal regard for different outcomes).

This set of procedures is an essential part of a learners' entitlement, and is about equitable access to learning and the quality of that learning.

LEA curriculum planners may wish to consider the following questions when designing the common curriculum framework:

- **What are the aims of this educational service?**
- **What are the educational principles which underpin that service?**
- **What are the educational procedures which facilitate equitable access and effective learning?**
- **Are these aims, principles and procedures applicable to *all* learners in this authority? If not, why not?**

Appendix 1 provides extracts from LEA curriculum statements which illustrate some of the ideas in this section.

CONTENT

The curriculum framework described in section 4 is recommended as a starting-point, but LEAs will wish to require colleges to compose a curriculum statement which describes entitlement in more detail. For example, all learning programmes have components which may need to be specified for some contexts. FEU suggests that, in doing so, the content of a programme should be considered in terms of:

- skills : including performance-related (product skills) and activity-related (process skills);
- knowledge : including theoretical and practical understanding;
- experience : gained before and during a particular learning programme;
- learning support : comprising the infrastructure surrounding learning programmes, including guidance.

Breadth and relevance are more likely to be provided by these components than by merely attempting a balance between subjects. The effectiveness of the combination is likely to be judged by its success in developing competence in a variety of vocational and other roles.

The need for a common curriculum within which learning is provided has led some to define a core, and much work is currently being undertaken by LEAs to design an 'entitlement core' within TVEI. In developing a core, it should be seen as only a part of the entitlement, and not the entitlement itself. A common core of learning content, defined in the National Curriculum as single academic subjects, is now a requirement up to the age of 16. Post-16, it may not be appropriate to categorise and deliver learning solely within a subject-based core especially if it is both common and compulsory. It may be even less appropriate for individuals over 19.

HMI have encouraged a shift of emphasis from subjects to areas of experience in the context of the 11-16 curriculum [6], and recommended a 'common framework which provides coherence, and, while taking into account individual needs and abilities, still ensures the provision of a broadly based experience'. A core based on learning experiences would seem to be appropriate for all learners, one to which they should all have access and which should form the basis for curriculum planning. It is not, however, something which all learners would necessarily choose to access all of the time.

For some curriculum planners, this core is expressed in the form of a checklist of activities, such as work experience and residential experience, while others use these and/or a list of areas of learning. This was first suggested by FEU in 1979 [7]. It describes groups of experiences and outcomes (including skills, knowledge and attitudes) capable of application in a variety of contexts, and has been helpful in providing the basis for consideration of core entitlement.

OUTCOMES

Learners should be aware of the potential outcomes, as well as the content, of a programme. Some outcomes will be pre-specified according to external criteria, while others may be individually negotiated. As indicated earlier, an important outcome of all learning programmes will be competence. FEU has defined competence as the possession and development of sufficient skills, knowledge, appropriate attitudes and experience for successful performance in life roles, thus embracing academic, vocational and personal competence.

Learners should also be informed of the range of opportunities following from an agreed programme if it is satisfactorily completed. Some colleges already provide this in the prospectus, but it also needs to be addressed at LEA level. Learners should be allowed to negotiate their own interim targets for achievement within nationally agreed parameters and mechanisms by which this will be checked.

PROGRESSION

A comprehensive and impartial description of progression opportunities should form part of the contract between the institution and the learner, and will need to be supported by initial and continuing guidance. For some colleges, this may necessitate a shift of emphasis away from being provision-driven; that is to say, planning should begin with an analysis of clients' needs and not with an analysis of what teachers want to teach. This shift to a needs-driven approach may require colleges to update their staffing expertise. The role for LEAs will be to check that learners' needs are being met.

The preceding paragraphs could provide the basis for answering the following questions relating to a learner's entitlement:

- **What will I learn on this programme?**
- **What competence will I acquire?**
- **What will I be able to do after that?**

Another question remains to be answered which is just as important:

- **How will I be treated? Will that differ from the way other learners in this institution/authority are treated? If so, why?**

EXPERIENCE

Learners will often prefer to attend an institution in which they will feel comfortable rather than one which apparently best meets their extrinsic needs. This part of curriculum entitlement is about the kind of experience which learners have while they attend schools and colleges. Individuals should be able to expect equal and equitable treatment regardless of their individual needs.

An individual learner's entitlement may be described in the form of a learning contract, initially between the LEA and the learner, and then specifically between the learner and the providing institution, or a combination of them. This will, of course, be only a small part of the total provision on offer in a locality, but will be designed within the agreed overall LEA curriculum framework and underpinned by the prescribed principles. This contract may be in the form of a learning plan describing:

- content : this will be negotiated within the constraints of prevailing resources;
- outcomes : these will be negotiated within the context of nationally agreed targets, and pre-specified by external bodies;
- progression : this will be individual;
- experiences : these will be common to all learners.

The equity of treatment and quality of experience which learners receive will be determined by the curriculum framework described in section 4.

Appendix 2 provides extracts from college curriculum statements which illustrate some of the ideas in this section.

Following the LEA curriculum statement, the various plans and policies may need to be synthesised into a coherent framework within which all post-14 education and training can be implemented. A development plan should be operationalised and implemented by institutions. This process of working from the LEA statement through a synthesis of plans and description of curriculum entitlement to institutional action plans will be followed by LEAs and colleges which place a value on the quality of provision and intend the curriculum to guide decisions about schemes of delegation. The process will also provide the basis of the framework within which the performance of institutions can be monitored and evaluated.

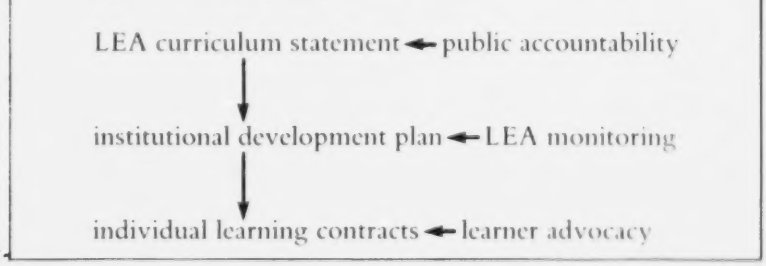
LEAs must design and monitor the implementation of the plan because they are accountable to constituents in a way that individual colleges are not. Colleges and their learning provision are part of the planned resources for those constituents. Greater institutional autonomy will not ensure coherence or comprehensiveness without LEA guidance. While an LEA will have an obligation to provide a curriculum entitlement in its institutions, a school or college will have an obligation to provide a service which meets local needs. Institutions and LEAs need to give equal attention to individual needs and collective community and employment needs.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICY

An LEA may start this process by undertaking an audit of community and local employment needs. It will also be appropriate for many colleges to conduct such an audit, together with a thorough analysis of individual learners' needs, before finalising provision. This will be particularly so if a college is in a large or geographically disparate LEA or intends to provide a comprehensive service. The audit would then become a continuous process. It would result in an institutional policy statement, sometimes called a 'mission statement' (agreed with the LEA), followed by an action plan (agreed with the governing body), and learning contracts (agreed with the individuals).

Colleges may wish to define a local entitlement, in addition to the LEA statement, including a core curriculum of outcomes and experiences for all learners, and may wish to ensure that a system of learner advocacy guarantees its delivery. This may be provided by LEA monitoring, or an external agency acting as an impartial broker, or by the learners taking responsibility for themselves following guidance. This overall process is shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Putting the plan into action



The tension between quality and cost-effectiveness will be most acute at college level, and managers will need to consider carefully not only the range of provision on offer but also the range of educational courses and services not on offer. The success of a college cannot be judged on high examination pass rates with a selective client group, as the true measure of effectiveness is the amount of progress made by all learners from their level of achievement at entry to their level at the point of exit. Nor is the successful college one which simply provides courses on demand. That student-led model, in which colleges exist to satisfy learners' wants, could lead to a proliferation of unsuitable programmes, reinforcing failure and lacking progression.

The role for the college is in mediating between learner aspiration, available and potential provision, and realistic progression opportunities. In this mediation process, the college entitlement policy will be the yardstick by which the equity of provision is judged. There should be scope for responding positively to an employer's request for short, full-cost recovery, programmes and providing for the individual needs of a disadvantaged student within the common curriculum framework of the college.

In this connection, there are two questions to be asked by college managers of their clients:

- **Did they get what they needed? (minimum)**
- **Did they get all that we could provide? (maximum).**

The difference between the minimum and maximum entitlements will often comprise a variety of learning support mechanisms, including guidance, tutoring, individualised negotiated learning, and the package of curriculum enrichment elements described earlier. Enrichment is both expensive and cost-effective; it is not a marginal activity and cannot be provided cheaply. It is, however, investing in efficient learning and, if successfully implemented, it maximises learning outcomes and optimises progression. In reducing learning wastage it is a powerful and cost-effective weapon. Once this is realised, there may be a shift of resources from teaching activities to learning support systems.

Curriculum enrichment needs to be carefully marketed both inside and outside the college. Evidence of the intended benefits will need to be shown, and in this connection colleges may wish to work towards defining some performance indicators for curriculum quality. Elements of enrichment will be most effective when integrated into mainstream programmes rather than offered as 'bolt-on' packages or optional modules. In this way, the agreed curriculum principles are embedded in all programmes but specific content remains a non-compulsory (negotiated) element.

The preceding paragraphs have discussed curriculum quality as an essential component of entitlement. Another essential aspect is the quantity of provision. LEAs must consider their local staying-on rates and look closely at whether existing provision satisfies the overall needs of the community. The aim should be to ensure that all potential learners are enfranchised and that no-one falls through the net. For LEAs, this will require a consideration of fee structures and cost implications. Some may wish to consider the possibility of providing two or three years of free education post-16 for everyone, which could be accessed at 16, or later, or over a period of time.

For a college, the issue of quantity means making some difficult decisions about *what* is offered and what is left out of the college provision. It is also about examining *who* is provided for, and whether that is equitable.

In considering this, college managers may wish to ask themselves:

- **Who is not coming to the college?**
- **Why not?**
- **What, if anything, should I do about that?**

Further education is undergoing a process of modernisation. Future developments are likely to encourage further multi-agency provision post-16 in which colleges are essential partners but not sole owners. More institutional autonomy, the growth of private provision, more demand for part-time and modular packages, accelerated technology and ever-changing skill needs could change further education quickly and profoundly. In terms of the curriculum model presented in figure 2, the balance of a college's activities may shift to needs analysis, the tailor-making of learning programmes and evaluation, and away from implementation. Colleges may, therefore, be involved in a shift from being teaching centres to becoming learning resource, testing and accreditation centres. Managing the transition will be difficult and painful for further education staff. The purpose of the service, and changes to it, must be kept in mind at all times - simply, to provide better learning opportunities and experiences for everyone.

Appendix 2 provides extracts from college curriculum statements which illustrate some of the ideas in this section.

SUMMARY

This paper provides a description of the curriculum planning process which should be undertaken by LEAs and institutions in response to the 1988 Education Reform Act but also in the future on a continuous basis.

It suggests that there should be a FOCUS ON THE CURRICULUM which synthesises existing plans, unifies provision, and emphasises planning for learning and learners.

The scheme, plan, curriculum statement and development strategy produced as a result of LEA CURRICULUM PLANNING should be seen to have separate but inter-connected functions. Resources should be related to learning; planning should provide the opportunity for development and accountability; and there should be adequate support.

The most effective planning will be based on a CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK common to all learners. The framework is a statement of what should be provided and should comprise a detailed description of the aims, principles and procedures of the education service.

CURRICULUM ENTITLEMENT is about what learners have access to and receive, which may be different from what providers plan and deliver. The minimum entitlement should comprise negotiated content, negotiated and pre-specified outcomes, individual progression opportunities and learning experiences which are the same for everyone.

In order to deliver this, INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION will need to be responsive and dynamic. Within the parameters of the LEA plan, colleges may wish to publish a mission statement and then formulate an action plan. The purpose of this development will be to provide learning which is enriching and equitable.

REFERENCES

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   Planning Staff Development: A Guide for Managers FEU, 1987
2. *Relevance, Flexibility and Competence*, FEU, 1987
3. *Supporting Vocational Change*, FEU, 1987
4. *Vocational Preparation*, FEU, 1981
5. *17+: A New Qualification*, DES, 1981
6. *Curriculum 11-16: Towards a Statement of Entitlement*, HMI, 1983
7. *A Basis for Choice*, FEU, 1979

APPENDIX 1

This appendix provides extracts from LEA curriculum statements which reflect some of the FEU proposals in sections 3 and 4 of this document.

Examples 1 and 2 illustrate the way in which two LEAs intend to focus on curriculum entitlement.

Example 1

The key to the whole of this authority's 13-19 educational policy lies in the belief and requirement that all young people within the LEA's boundaries have an equal right to a similar range of educational opportunities. Throughout the whole curriculum provision in schools and colleges, and the administration and support services which underpin them, this concept of the entitlement curriculum is basic.

Example 2

In the opinion of the LEA the notion of the entitlement curriculum is applicable across all phases of education covered by this statement... Entitlement is a key unifying theme running through the planning of the whole curriculum. This statement will expand on the notion of entitlement explaining how curriculum principles such as breadth, balance, and coherence can be developed as the basis for a whole school/college plan.... A post-16 entitlement curriculum would aim to facilitate student access to courses, student transfer between courses, student progression between levels of courses and beyond courses to further study, employment, etc., and the development of a coherent curriculum for each individual student.

Examples 3 and 4 describe the perceived need for a curriculum policy statement, and the purposes that it is intended to serve, in two LEAs.

Example 3

The Local Education Authority has the responsibility of providing the framework of support, resources to develop the process, and of helping participants to understand clearly what they are entitled to expect from that provision. It is important that both the providers and users, whatever their responsibilities and needs, should have a document as reference for access and accountability. The purpose of this policy document is to outline the educational entitlement to be provided for the 13-19 age group and how it is delivered through the curriculum in schools and colleges. It is not intended to detail all aspects and will be supported by additional documents detailing particular issues and aspects of the curriculum.

Example 4

The preceding post-16 curriculum statement is intended to serve three purposes:

1. It should enable individual lecturers and the management of schools and colleges to review, evaluate and develop the quality of the curriculum on offer.
2. The identification of the features and processes that should be employed in the curriculum gives an indication of the resourcing model required under the 1988 Education Reform Act.
3. This curriculum framework offers a sounding board against which the LEA will monitor and evaluate the quality of post-16 provision.

Example 5 *shows how an LEA is basing a curriculum statement on the concept of entitlement, and how curriculum is being broadly defined.*

There is an awareness and understanding that:

a) the requirement for the provision of a statement by the Authority as to the entitlement of all students in relation to their educational experiences includes those young people who are continuing their education or training to the age of 19. This has brought a recognition that entitlement encompasses all our young people right across the ability spectrum, and such a commitment is of paramount importance within this LEA.

b) the development of an awareness and understanding within the totality of the institution that a curriculum is something far greater than a series of planned activities, often under subject headings, taking place within the classroom in the specific time made available. Such a definition no longer does justice to what is required of our young people nor of the ways in which schools/colleges must operate if they are effectively to deliver the educational requirements.
In essence, the curriculum is that which people receive from being in a school or college.

Example 6 *is a statement of the aims of the education service in an LEA.*

Education is the process by which individuals become confident, competent, socially responsible members of the community. Educational provision should be concerned with meeting the needs of each participant; it should provide an enjoyable, wide-ranging and supportive experience to help people to develop:

- enquiring minds;
- appreciation of the range of knowledge and how to gain access to it;
- appreciation of their needs as individuals and how to relate to and support the needs of others;
- appreciation of the total society in which they live and how they might contribute to and develop that society through their life and work;
- ability to make sensible choices from the range of opportunities available.

Examples 7 and 8 are different approaches to stating the educational principles which underpin provision in two LEAs.

Example 7

'Better Schools' and 'Curriculum from 5 to 16' advocate the four principles of breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation for the primary and secondary curriculum. In the post-16 curriculum a wider set of principles seems necessary. These are:

- *Accessibility*. There is a need to raise participation rates and enhance access for all people. The entire pattern of provision should be reasonably accessible to all of the community.
- *Progressivity*. Post-16 education should build systematically and coherently on the prior learning of students. This will require greater continuity pre and post 16, an enhanced system of guidance, and the development of sophisticated methods of recording achievement.
- *Autonomy*. Post-16 programmes need to shift responsibility for learning increasingly on to students themselves. The principle of autonomy needs to be reflected in the outcomes of the learning process and in the detail of curriculum design and delivery.
- *Relevance*. Post-16 education provision should meet the real needs of the local community, including employers, the needs of the individual student, and the needs of industry, commerce and the wider world. It should serve all sections of the community and be consumer-led rather than provider-led.
- *Breadth*. This should be reflected in the nature of the outcomes of learning programmes and in the manner in which syllabuses are interpreted. The inclusion of enhancing components should be integrated and not bolted-on. Breadth can also be achieved by using a broad definition of competence relating to successful performance in life roles.
- *Balance*. In post-16 education, the concept of balance must mean more than the balance of time allocated to various subjects. It involves the balanced development of all appropriate outcomes and balance in terms of teaching and learning strategies.
- *Differentiation*. The pattern of course provision in an institution (or an area) must meet the needs and abilities of all potential students. Also, curriculum design and delivery should ensure that there is a match between learning experiences within courses and the individual needs of particular students.
- *Coherence*. Within a discrete geographical area there should be a coherent range of courses. With regard to individual courses and the range of experiences undertaken by students, programmes should be carefully planned and integrated.

Example 8

Already, consideration of a variety of issues impinging upon society in general and education in particular have led to the articulation of a set of principles to which the Authority is committed. These principles are the bedrock upon which the philosophy of our educational provision is founded. The principles apply equally to the whole range of those receiving education as well as to the whole ability range; they are in fact universal statements about the nature of education as understood and accepted in this LEA at the time of writing. These principles (not in any hierarchical order) are:

1. Education must respond equally to the needs of all individuals. The needs of individual people may be different but any one need is of no greater importance than any other.

2. Education must look forward and recognise that it is the means of preparing people for a future of which we have little or no conception.

3. Education must take place within an international context as opposed to the national context within which is has operated to date.

4. Education must free the individual to enable the expression of human uniqueness.

5. Education must take cognisance of the rights of the individual and encourage mutual respect between individuals and between ethnic and cultural groups.

6. Education should equip people with the desire and skills to participate in a democratic society.

7. Education must encourage awareness of the fact that society exists only as a combination of the many and varied roles of individuals within a structured framework.

Examples 9, 10 and 11 describe the learning procedures, learning processes and areas of learning experiences and activities which are being advocated by some LEAs.

Example 9

To fulfil the principles of the entitlement curriculum, the framework of provision within this authority's schools and colleges will incorporate:

- adherence to the development of pupils' self-awareness and the encouragement of the right to participate fully in the negotiation of their own study programmes;
- constant awareness and appraisal to ensure recognition of success by various interim means and certification, and the identification of short-term study programmes;
- constant and cross-curricular application of problem-solving techniques using modern technology;
- continuing individual counselling, looking not only at students' current programmes but also at the opportunities existing beyond compulsory education.

Example 10

The programme to which young people are entitled should ensure development for all in the following areas:

- communication and language
- mathematics
- science
- technology

- creative and expressive arts
- humanities
- moral and spiritual education
- recreation and physical education

To assist this process further, and ensure that what the young people learn is appropriate for their futures, there will be an entitlement to a series of experiences at key points in their development, namely:

- work experience
- work practice
- community experience
- residential experience
- cross-curriculum/problem-solving work
- technology awareness and application
- careers education and counselling.

Example 11

There is now a recognition that new cross-curricular elements such as problem solving and learning how to learn have a rightful place in the curriculum, not as single discrete elements but rather as a set of processes which must pervade the whole of learning. Whatever is taught, the manner in which it is taught should be underpinned by these learning processes:

- the development of recording achievement;
- personal and social education including experiences of the world of work;
- the application of information technology;
- the utilisation of learning skills;
- the application of problem solving techniques;
- the development of learning and thinking skills;
- the development of attitudes and values such as tolerance, empathy and respect for other people;
- the development of physical and practical skills;
- the development of forms of expression.

APPENDIX 2

This appendix provides extracts from college curriculum statements which reflect some of the FEU proposals in sections 5 and 6 of this document.

Example *12 illustrates a definition of the values and principles underpinning the provision of a college curriculum entitlement.*

Values

The College has been created to enable each and every post-16 member of the community to avail themselves, if they so wish, of the opportunities to continue with, or return to, further education. Part of that willingness will itself, however, depend on the kind of attitudes with which they will be received and treated. One value which the College will exist to uphold, and which it must exhibit in every aspect of its operation, is the encouragement of *diversity*.

However, whilst all students are different, their *entitlement* to an enriched educational experience, in a truly democratic community, must be the same, and therefore a second value which must permeate every aspect of college life is *equality*.

All students should be entitled to:

- *equality of access* - for all, to all, through a variety of routes;
- *equality of opportunities* - to fulfil their true potential;
- *equality of respect* - regardless of perceived abilities, gender, race, social background, age, religion or creed;
- *equality of esteem* - of self and by every member of the college community.

'Democracy' does not simply consist of an isolated activity such as voting, but of engaging in an involvement in every aspect of life. The value which best guarantees the democratic involvement of those engaged in the College's enterprises is *co-operation*.

All students will be of an age in which society treats them, in most respects, as an adult. It is vital therefore that the College recognises this and extends the individual's development by treating them as a valued member of the College community. Irrespective of age or attainment, there must be co-operation in the achievement of goals between teacher and taught, in a caring, trusting environment. The process of learning will therefore be characterised by activities such as consultation, negotiation and participation.

The aspiration for all students is that their experience of being a member of the college community is characterised by 'quality' in every aspect of their experience, so the pursuit of *excellence* must be a continuing process - for staff and students alike.

For all students, what constitutes 'excellence' is a relative concept, in the sense that each will bring a different agenda for achievement and different aptitudes to bear on the learning process. However, each student will only be able to achieve their full potential if they are encouraged to 'excel' in every activity they pursue.

Principles

The principles on which the College is founded are those which were used to shape post-16 educational provision in the authority.

The principles are:

- All members of the community should be enabled to fulfil their potential through access to, and the availability of, a broad, relevant and balanced range of educational opportunities of a high quality.
- Post-16 provision should aim to enhance existing educational opportunities, by actively widening access to sections of the population that have not previously participated in post-compulsory education. In particular, there should be an attempt to counter the inherent disadvantages of disability, gender, race and social class.
- The curricula offered should be delivered in ways which maximise flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs, and which enable the individual to achieve the highest level of competence of which they are capable.
- Provision should be comprehensive, in terms of aiming to remove false existing divisions between academic, pre-vocational and vocational education.
- In both content and form, provision should be sensitive to community needs, including those of local business and industry.
- All students, whether school-leavers or adults, should be offered opportunities for progression and vocational and personal development, through an entitlement to effective guidance, counselling and other forms of personal and educational support.
- The service should be delivered in the most efficient manner consistent with its basic principles.

Example 13 *is from a college development plan which is focusing on the concept of a client-centred college.*

Client-centred college

The aim of this college forward planning exercise was to explore ways in which the college could become thoroughly client centred. This paper reflects the findings of the task groups and the thinking of the college executive, and presents a joint recommendation:

- to adopt a college 'mission' statement of purpose and values;
- to implement a number of related policy, organisational and structural changes;
- to introduce a system of annual evaluation and planning to achieve continuing institutional development.

The process and extent of planning was extensive and has involved the establishment of task groups on:

- marketing and responsiveness
- student services
- curriculum
- monitoring and evaluation
- planning and resourcing
- support services
- accommodation
- college structure

It has also drawn on the work of three other working parties on computing, resource-based learning and college information systems. The recommendations will now be fully discussed in departments, academic board, with recognised trades unions and finally the Governing Body.

The concept of a client-centred college was analysed for the central issues of college development and these have been addressed by the task groups. The discussions reveal two central priorities to be achieved in the future:

- that the clients and the meeting of their needs be central to everything that the College and its staff do, thereby achieving real and equal opportunity for all;
- that the work of staff who directly serve the client be supported more effectively.

Client-centred curriculum

The central concept of a 'client-centred' curriculum relies upon an acceptable definition of curriculum such as, for example, 'the totality of planned learning experiences for students both formal and informal'. The important place of course objectives is to define the purposes/outcomes of the course as derived from explicit evidence of need and demand. Those same objectives subsequently provide the basis for evaluation.

The commitment to student-centred learning and to concentrate on the students' needs and progress includes the development and availability of high quality learning packages which deliver curricula with increased flexibility.

The achievement of a more client-centred curriculum will be progressed by action in four areas:

- establishment of core skills and specialist or generic workshops;
- a potential commitment to modularise assessment and provision with its attendant requirements;
- the encouragement of open/flexible learning;
- the establishment of a unit and senior post for curriculum and staff development (including quality monitoring and evaluation) incorporating departmental curriculum advisers and cross-college programme co-ordinating, e.g. for CPVE, core skills, Access provision.

Example 14 *describes an approach to a college's curriculum provision which is based on an entitlement core and student-centredness.*

The entitlement core concept asserts that the tertiary college has a vital role in identifying key experiences and benefits which should be made available to all students, regardless of their programme of study.

In considering such an approach, the objectives of the entitlement core would include:

- assisting young people to obtain specialised knowledge and skills;
- . helping them to prepare for change;
- helping them to fulfil their role as emerging citizens within a multi cultural, democratic society;
- helping them to make informed and considered decisions about educational, vocational and personal issues.

The entitlement core could offer each student the opportunity to:

- negotiate a suitable programme of study, and support in monitoring progress
- develop confidence and competence in numeracy
- develop confidence and competence in communication
- develop confidence and competence in IT
- have access to appropriate careers guidance
- receive support in developing appropriate study skills
- receive personal counselling as needed
- explore, together with others, issues related to adult and working life
- have access to recreational, cultural and sporting activities
- work alongside adults in the community or workplace
- consider equal opportunity issues
- develop skills in working as a member of a team
- plan, organise and run activities
- take part in problem solving and decision making

Example 15 *is part of a proposal which aims to develop a more equitable provision.*

The college aims to develop adequate provision of further education for the community. The college plans to identify and open up client groups and to ensure maximum market penetration by:

1. adapting and developing management information systems to provide evidence of the characteristics of the current student population and the community which the the college serves;

2. adapting and developing procedures for curriculum evaluation which will measure the extent to which learning programmes are appropriate to particular client groups;

3. adapting existing provision and developing new learning programmes to meet identified needs;

4. implementing a linked staff development programme.

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Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:
a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvement can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of, further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
d) to disseminate and publish information, and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information, about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

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